

Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. Nor is there evidence that the United States acted in Lebanon primarily to forestall a trend that might have culminated in full-scale Arab-Israeli war.¹¹ In fact, Eisenhower on several occasions in the first days of the crisis reportedly considered the merits of "unleashing" Israel against Nasser, and General Twining even proposed that Israel should seize the West Bank of Jordan as part of an area-wide counteroffensive that would include British intervention in Iraq and Turkish intervention in Syria.¹² Needless to say, such thoughts were not translated into policy, but the fact that they were considered suggests that prevention of an Arab-Israeli war was not seen as the priority concern for the Eisenhower administration.

Operational Objectives

If the broad concerns behind U.S. policy in the Lebanon crisis can be comparatively easily discerned, what of the more concrete operational objectives? What did the United States hope to accomplish through its military deployments and its diplomacy?

Eisenhower's decision to use force in the Lebanon crisis was meant to influence both adversaries and friends. Principal among the adversaries was the USSR. U.S. action was designed, among other things, to deter the USSR from exploiting for its advantage a volatile situation growing out of the events in Iraq and Lebanon. Eisenhower and Dulles judged that the USSR would not react militarily, although others such as Twining and some State Department officials were considerably less sanguine. Even the pessimists, however, felt that "we should face the risk now [of general war] as well as any time."¹³

Apart from the hope that U.S. military action would prevent the USSR from gaining ground in the Middle East, an objective that was formulated in particularly vague terms, the more concrete goals involved Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. In Lebanon the United States hoped to ensure that the shock waves of the Iraqi revolution would not exacerbate the tensions that had engulfed the country in civil war during the preceding months.

The objective sought by Eisenhower in Lebanon, then, was a rela-

11. Kerr, "Lebanese Civil War," pp. 79-80, provides the most cogent argument that intervention in Lebanon was intended to prevent a chain reaction that could have ended in Arab-Israeli war.

12. Interviews with ranking U.S. officials involved in the Lebanon decision.

13. Loy Henderson, in "Meeting re Iraq."

Force without War
Lebanon, 1958, and Jordan, 1970

adversely limited one—to prevent dissident forces, backed by the UAR, from overthrowing the legal government and endangering American lives. Most U.S. officials seem to have endorsed this policy, although the U.S. ambassador in Beirut was opposed to the landing of the troops, and subsequently went to considerable lengths to ensure that they did not inadvertently clash with the Lebanese Army under the command of General Fuad Chehab.¹⁴

It has been argued by some observers that the real objective of the U.S. forces in Lebanon was to stage a counterrevolution in Iraq.¹⁵ The coup in Iraq was indeed the critical event leading to U.S. intervention, and there were some in the U.S. government who contemplated a major operation throughout the Middle East that would simultaneously deal with the anti-Western regimes in the UAR and Iraq, relying on some mixture of U.S., British, Israeli, and even Turkish forces to do the job. The British were also proponents of broad action to protect the Western position in the area, but were unwilling to act alone.¹⁶ Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had been in Washington during June to discuss the situation in the Middle East, and when the Iraqi revolution occurred he immediately sought Washington's views. To his obvious dismay, Washington was prepared only to send troops into Lebanon, and he was urged to hold his own forces in reserve.¹⁷ It was only a few days later that the United States promised support for British forces to intervene in Jordan at King Hussein's request. By then, the hope of restoring a friendly regime in Baghdad had faded, but the British continued to show concern with Iraqi designs on Kuwait, a fear that came to be taken seriously in Washington as well.

While it is impossible to be certain that Eisenhower did not envisage the use of force to overthrow the new Iraqi regime, it seems more likely that, in the wake of the July 14 revolution, he wanted to have some forces in the area in case events took an unexpected turn. After all, the new regime was an enigma. Was it Nasserist, or possibly even Communist?

14. See the account in Charles W. Thayer, *Diplomat* (Harper, 1959), chaps. 1-3.

15. Peter Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero* (Little, Brown, 1974), p. 775, argues that counterrevolution in Iraq was seriously considered. He bases this conclusion on the size of the U.S. force in Lebanon, which he gives as 114,000, relying on the misprint in Eisenhower's memoirs, *Waging Peace*, p. 286, where the figure of 114,357 is given. The correct figure is 14,357.

16. Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm, 1956-1959* (Macmillan, 1971), pp. 506-25.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 512.

Force without... Could it hold onto power, or would some other faction of the army try to seize control? If a group of pro-Western officers were to call for how should the United States respond? What if the new Iraqi regime were to try to annex Kuwait? It seems fair to assume that Eisenhower wanted to be in a position to deal with such contingencies if they should arise. Thus, a minimum U.S. force in Lebanon and a British force in Jordan, plus other U.S. deployments elsewhere in the world, would provide the capability that might be needed if the situation in the area were to take an unexpected dangerous turn. In the event, of course, nothing of the sort outlined here happened, and Robert Murphy, the deputy under secretary of state, was even sent to Baghdad to reassure the new rulers there that the United States was not plotting against them.¹⁸

In brief, the use of force by the United States in the Lebanon crisis was related to a set of general objectives involving Lebanon and British policy in Jordan:

1. Prevent the spread of instability (Nasserism, communism) to the remaining pro-Western Arab regimes of Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

2. Deter Soviet adventurism in the area.

3. Develop the capability to act in or against Iraq should circumstances require.

4. Enhance U.S. credibility as an ally and as a superpower.

And to some specific objectives:

1. Stabilize the situation in and around Beirut, by the use of force if necessary (control airport, protect presidency).

2. Evacuate and protect U.S. citizens if necessary.

3. Coordinate a response with the British and limit the scope of their action to Jordan.

Patterns of Communication

To convey these operational objectives to the intended targets of U.S. actions during the crisis a variety of means were employed. Before the crisis, the goals of preventing the spread of communism and of supporting pro-Western regimes had been enshrined in the Eisenhower Doctrine and had been periodically repeated by Dulles. Once the crisis entered its new phase on July 14, however, a restatement of purposes was neces-

18. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 281.

Lebanon, 1958, and Jordan, 1970

ary. Eisenhower concentrated first on the British allies to ensure that their response would be consistent with U.S. plans to act unilaterally in Lebanon. Eisenhower reportedly talked to Macmillan by telephone in the morning of July 14, although the content of that communication is unknown.¹⁹ Later that afternoon, after giving the order to land troops the next day in Lebanon, Eisenhower again called Macmillan to inform him of his decision. Macmillan stressed that the issue was not Lebanon alone, but rather that it involved broader developments in the area and that some action in Jordan was also essential.²⁰ Eisenhower suggested that the United Kingdom hold its forces in Cyprus in reserve for the time being. According to Eisenhower, Macmillan wanted his assurance that "we were in this together, all the way. This I gave him with the understanding that I could take action only one phase at a time."²¹ Two days later, Macmillan sent Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd to Washington, where he found the U.S. attitude improving.²² In talks with Lloyd, Eisenhower and Dulles promised "moral and logistical support" for the British operation in Jordan and agreed to work to get Israeli permission for overflights.²³

Eisenhower was aware of the need to defend his policy before U.S. and international opinion. On July 14 he met with congressional leaders, among whom several were critical of the decision and questioned the assumption that Nasser was a tool of the Communists. As troops were disembarking in Lebanon on July 15, Eisenhower released a statement at the White House which stressed that the purpose of the military operation was to defend Lebanon's independence and integrity.²⁴ A similar message was sent to Congress, and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge made the same point at the United Nations, where a meeting of the Security Council had been called for July 15. Finally, Eisenhower gave a public address to the nation that same evening.

In his speech, Eisenhower referred to such precedents as the civil war in Greece in 1947, the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948, the fall of China to the Communists in 1949, and Communist threats in

19. Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Little, Brown, 1965), p. 363.

20. Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, p. 512.

21. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 273.

22. Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, p. 515.

23. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 279. Eisenhower refused to commit U.S. forces to Jordan but promised to help ensure the success of the British operations if they got into trouble.

24. Ibid., pp. 271-74.

Korea and Indochina beginning in 1950. The implication was that communism lay behind the events in Lebanon as well. Nonetheless, Eisenhower did indicate the limited scope of U.S. action, emphasizing that he hoped rapid UN action to protect Lebanon's independence would permit the early withdrawal of United States forces." Nothing was said about broad concerns with Iraq, oil, or the Arab-Israeli conflict. For all purposes this was a Lebanese crisis, behind which communism's major influence could be detected. In brief, public statements did little to clarify specific U.S. objectives, serving rather to justify the operation in terms of the Eisenhower Doctrine.

Perhaps the most important means of clarifying U.S. objectives to the key actors in the crisis was through Robert Murphy's diplomatic mission to the area. At Dulles's suggestion, Eisenhower agreed to send Murphy to Lebanon, where he arrived on July 19. Murphy quickly concluded that communism had nothing to do with the crisis in Lebanon, and his talks with various Lebanese leaders helped to work out the elements of the political compromise that resulted in General Chehab's election to the presidency on July 31.²⁵ Shortly thereafter, U.S. troop strength in Lebanon was reduced.

In addition to his diplomatic efforts in Lebanon, Murphy also traveled to Baghdad and Cairo to reassure Iraq's new ruler, Abd al-Karim Qasbi, that U.S. troops in Lebanon were not aimed at Iraq and to reestablish contact with Nasser, whose intentions in the area were of continuing concern to Washington. The net effect of the Murphy mission was to scale down the scope of U.S. objectives to the restoration of order and political stability in Lebanon. The more grandiose anti-Communist, anti-Nasser, and anti-Iraq goals faded into the background as the worst fears of policymakers proved to be unfounded. The landings of U.S. troops may have had a calming effect on the area, and, having served that purpose at the outset, they became less relevant to subsequent events than Murphy's diplomatic efforts. From the initial pursuit of vague, global objectives, the United States increasingly limited its goals to ensuring an orderly transition to a new regime acceptable to Nasser and to the majority of Lebanese. Unlike Eisenhower's public statements, which tended to obscure the goals of U.S. action in Lebanon, Murphy's talks in Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt appear to have helped clarify and set limits on the military operations.

25. Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Doubleday, 1964), p. 451.

Military Operations

In mid-May, shortly after President Chamoun had accused the UAR of intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs and had queried the United States on its attitude in the event that a request for military assistance were forthcoming, Eisenhower authorized a number of steps that prepared the way for later military action. First, the Marine contingent of the Sixth Fleet was doubled in strength to over 3,500 men. Second, arms were sent to Lebanon by air and sea. Third, transport aircraft were sent to Germany in the event that U.S. citizens had to be evacuated from the Middle East. Twenty-two Army units in Europe were also placed on alert. All of these actions in May had no visible impact on the crisis, and it was not until July 14 that a second series of moves was ordered, this time including the landing of troops in Lebanon.

As soon as the news of the Iraqi coup reached Washington, Eisenhower met with his diplomatic and military advisers and ordered a worldwide military alert of U.S. forces. Strategic Air Command planes were prepared for takeoff if necessary. The Sixth Fleet, including the aircraft carriers *Essex*, *Saratoga*, and *Wasp*, was ordered to move toward the eastern Mediterranean. Joint Chiefs Chairman Twining was ordered to implement the plan for landing U.S. troops in Lebanon the next day.²⁶

On the afternoon of July 15 the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Marine Regiment, consisting of 1,700 men, landed on the beaches of Lebanon. U.S. Ambassador Robert McClintock, who disapproved of the landing, was worried that the Lebanese Army might oppose the Marines by force. There were, in fact, elements in the Lebanese armed forces that apparently favored resisting the U.S. landing. General Chehab had tried to keep the army out of the civil war, and now was confronted with an external threat as well. Ambassador McClintock recognized the danger and rushed to the point of debarkation, where he managed to convince Chehab to restrain his forces. The Lebanese Army then escorted the Marines to designated areas. U.S. forces were thereafter deployed with utmost care to avoid unintended clashes.²⁷

26. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, p. 364. ✓

27. Kerr, "Lebanese Civil War," pp. 79-80, argues that the key to the success of the intervention was the avoidance of violence. The troops by their mere presence had a calming effect, and the subsequent deployment of troops away from rebel-held areas helped to avoid hostile encounters. See McClintock, "American Landing in Lebanon," and Colonel H. A. Hadd, "Orders Firm but Flexible," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (October 1962), for details on operational problems of the landing and disputes over the chain of command.

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The next day, July 16, the 3rd Battalion of the 6th Marine Regiment landed, with the 1st Battalion of the 8th Marine Regiment arriving on the 18th. Two Army battle groups in Germany, the 187th Airborne and 503rd Airborne, were on call and could arrive in the area within twelve hours. In addition, tactical aircraft were flown to Turkey and the Sixth Fleet was reinforced.

General Twining also recommended the deployment of Air Force tankers into forward positions, as well as an increased level of readiness for the Strategic Air Command. According to Eisenhower, Twining advised him that these moves would be visible and might cause some misinterpretation of U.S. intentions, to which the President responded by ordering the moves precisely to underscore U.S. "readiness and determination without implying any threat of aggression."²⁸

Other military preparations were considered as well, such as the movement overseas of two full divisions. But "shipping was short," and Eisenhower decided not to charter additional vessels. Instead he merely ordered Twining "to keep a roster of available shipping." "Part of the 82nd Airborne Division [however] was held ready for quick airlift to Europe."²⁹

Finally, and presumably in response to British urgings, Eisenhower approved a recommendation from the Joint Chiefs for a seaborne movement of a Marine Corps regimental combat team then stationed on Okinawa to the Persian Gulf. There, in Eisenhower's view, it could help deter an Iraqi move into Kuwait or help protect other friendly governments. Twining was ordered to "be prepared to employ, subject to [Eisenhower's] approval, whatever means might become necessary to prevent any unfriendly forces from moving into Kuwait."³⁰ It seems clear that Eisenhower was referring to the possible use of nuclear weapons, an issue that was discussed several times during the crisis.

Despite pressure from Macmillan, Eisenhower decided against send-

28. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 276. In his memoirs, *Neither Liberty Nor Safety: A Hard Look at U.S. Military Policy and Strategy* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 64-65, General Nathan Twining takes a very hawkish view of the Lebanon crisis, arguing that the State Department "backpedaled" by ordering U.S. troops not to go into Lebanon with nuclear-tipped rockets. On page 148 he claims that "the Soviet bluff to take over Lebanon was called" by U.S. military action in the crisis.

29. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 276.

30. Ibid., p. 278; emphasis in original.

Lebanon, 1958, and Jordan
ing U.S. troops into Jordan
Kingdom with logistics and
some equipment and supply
even contemplated resupply
Dhahran in Saudi Arabia.
such an operation, although
Eisenhower from using the

At peak strength, the U.S.
more than 14,000 troops in
Sixth Fleet, with nearly 7,000
support of the landing. Most
from the United States and
flown from bases in the U.S.

As the crisis eased, U.S.
the last contingent leaving
curried involving the Lebanese
registered, the result of a

The Relationship of Force

The use of force was a
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U.S. troops were available
order if necessary, but
virtually no hostile encoun-
worked closely with Lebanese
intended confrontations.
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Chamoun regime to the
Robert Murphy as much
7-1 summarizes the inter-

A second objective
use of U.S. troops. To
ordinate carefully with

31. Ibid., p. 280.

32. Lt. Col. M. M. B. Bo
Military Review (February)